

II. CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for handwriting recognition, the apparatus comprising:

a touch-sensitive display screen providing a handwriting input area capable of detecting a handwritten user input; and

a processing device configured to interpret the handwritten user input as a symbol from a plurality of predefined symbols,

wherein the handwriting input area includes a writing start area, and wherein said writing start area is substantially smaller than said handwriting input area;

wherein the processing device is configured to provide a visual indication of said writing start area on said display screen, and

wherein the processing device is configured to interpret the user input as a symbol from the plurality of predefined symbols only if the detected user input is a pen down event starts within said writing start area and ends anywhere within a continuous as a pen move event in the handwriting input area within a predetermined period of time.

2. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, the apparatus having a user interface in which the display screen is included, wherein the processing device is configured to interpret the user input as a user interface control operation and not as a symbol if the user input starts outside of said writing start area.

3. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 2, wherein the processing device is further configured to interpret the user input as a user interface control operation and not as a symbol if a pen down event within said writing start area is not followed by a pen move event within a prescribed time period.

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said writing start area has a fixed location within said handwriting input area.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said processing device is configured to adjust the location of said writing start area depending on a current cursor position.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said location of said writing start area is adjustable by a user of the apparatus.

8. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said handwriting input area is formed by a majority of the display screen's available presentation area.

9. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said handwriting input area is formed by essentially the entire display screen's available presentation area.

10. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, said user input including at least one pen stroke, wherein said processing device is configured to display, on said display screen, a

graphical trace representing said at least one pen stroke prior to the interpretation thereof.

11. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein said processing device is configured to display, on said display screen, said symbol when it has been interpreted from said at least one pen stroke.

12. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said plurality of predefined symbols includes a symbol set selected from the group consisting of: Latin characters, upper case characters, lower case characters, Arabic numerals, punctuation symbols, Cyrillic characters, Chinese characters, Japanese Kanji symbols, Japanese Hiragana characters and Japanese Katakana characters, and user-defined symbols.

13. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, said plurality of predefined symbols including a first symbol set and a second symbol set, and said writing start area comprising a first subarea and a second subarea, wherein said processing device is configured to interpret the user input as a symbol from said first symbol set if the user input starts within said first subarea, and as a symbol from said second symbol set if the user input starts within said second subarea.

14. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 13, said plurality of predefined symbols further comprising a third symbol set, and said writing start area further comprising a third subarea, wherein said processing device is configured to interpret the user input as a symbol from said third symbol set if the user input starts within said third subarea.

15. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, in the form of a mobile terminal for a mobile telecommunications system.

16. (Original) An apparatus as in claim 1, in the form of a portable/personal digital assistant (PDA).

17. (Currently Amended) A method for handwriting recognition in an apparatus that has a touch-sensitive display screen with a handwriting input area capable of detecting a handwritten user input, the method comprising :

providing a writing start area within said handwriting input area, wherein said writing start area is substantially smaller than said handwriting input area;

visually indicating said writing start area on said display screen;

detecting a handwritten user input; and

interpreting the user input as a symbol from a plurality of predefined symbols only if the user input starts as a pen down event within said writing start area and continues as a pen move event ~~ends anywhere within~~ the handwriting input area within a predetermined period of time.

18. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 17, wherein, instead of interpreting the user input as a symbol, the user input is interpreted as a user interface control operation and not as a symbol if the user input starts outside of said writing start area.

19. (Original) A method as in claim 18, wherein the user input is further interpreted as a user interface control operation and not as a symbol if a pen down event within said writing start area is not followed by a pen move event within a prescribed time period.

20. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 17, further comprising adjusting a location of said writing start area within said handwriting input area depending on a current cursor position.

21. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 17, wherein said user input includes at least one pen stroke, the method further comprising displaying, on said display screen, a graphical trace representing said at least one pen stroke prior to the interpretation thereof.

22. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 21, further comprising displaying, on said display screen, said symbol when it has been interpreted from said at least one pen stroke.

23. (Original) A method as in claim 17, wherein said plurality of predefined symbols includes a symbol set selected from the group consisting of: Latin characters, upper case characters, lower case characters, Arabic numerals, punctuation symbols, Cyrillic characters, Chinese characters, Japanese Kanji symbols, Japanese Hiragana characters and Japanese Katakana characters, and user-defined symbols.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 17, wherein said plurality of predefined symbols include a first symbol set and a second symbol set, and said writing start area comprises a first sub-area and a second sub-area, the method further

comprising interpreting the user input as a symbol from said first symbol set if the user input starts within said first subarea, and as a symbol from said second symbol set if the user input starts within said second subarea.

25. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 24, wherein said plurality of predefined symbols further comprises a third symbol set, and said writing start area further comprises a third sub-area, the method further comprises interpreting the user input as a symbol from said third symbol set if the user input starts within said third sub-area.